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Stone—The Martyr of Freedom—
1838

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FROM

THE MARTYR OF FREEDOM.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT

EAST MACHIAS, NOVEMBER 30,

AND AT

MACHIAS, DECEMBER 7, 1837.

Fool not; for all may have,
If they dare try, a glorious life or grave.
George Herbert.

BY THOMAS T. STONE,
Pastor of a Church in East Machias, Me.

BOSTON:
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PREFACE.

I HAVE called ELIJAH P. LOVEJOY a MARTYR. Others choose to withhold the name. I am as little disposed, I trust, as most men, to quibble about a word. But where a word involves a principle, it is of some importance to ascertain and fix its meaning. What then is a martyr? It scarcely need be said, that the name originally signified a Witness. In this sense, all Christ's apostles were martyrs (μάρτυρες) even during their ministry. As in witnessing or attesting Christian truth, both the apostles and many other early disciples died by the violence of their enemies, the term seems to have lost its broader sense, and to have become appropriated to such as thus died. Hence, in modern times, it has been applied to every man who dies in testimony and vindication of any great truth, with which he has identified himself for life or death. He may be called, he may be, rash, obstinate, imprudent, mistaken in his judgment of what is the best mode of supporting truth; but if he seriously, deliberately, conscientiously devotes himself to the truth in peril of his life, his is the spirit, and if he falls, his is the end of the martyr. His imprudence is one thing, his martyrdom for the truth is another. Multitudes of early Chris-

tian martyrs were doubtless imprudent; but they were martyrs. Grant that Lovejoy were as rash and imprudent as has been alledged, yet certainly he died in attestation and defence of the great truth, GOD DEMANDS IN THE GOSPEL OF HIS SON, THE REDEMPTION OF SLAVES FROM A CRUEL OPPRESSION.

I have granted what I do not admit. That Mr. Lovejoy was even imprudent in his decision to reestablish his press at Alton, I have seen no evidence. From the first I believed it his duty, and therefore an act of prudence, to hold his ground to the last. I believe so still. That he had the same belief, his conduct proves. At all events, he gave himself to death for the truth — for Christian truth applied to the exposure and removal of a most dreadful sin. This is surely the whole essence and soul of martyrdom.

Whether he ought to have used weapons of defence, is a question which must be deemed as yet, in view of most minds, unsettled. Whatever I or any other man might think of it, there is not the slightest doubt that he acted conscientiously, without malice, nay, as he himself affirmed, with "inexpressible reluctance." Whether in this case his judgment were right or wrong, I envy not the minuter philosophy, the microscopic eye, whose chief power manifests itself in detecting the slighter deformities of a noble figure. I ask not the feelings which are unmoved by the grandeur of an Angelo's Moses, because, forsooth, it bears horns upon its brow; nor would I be of those who can behold either the fair face of the moon, thinking only of its jagged lines of light, and its broken surface seen through the telescope — or the glorious sun, only to remind you that there are dark spots, sometimes visible even to the naked eye, lying upon its disk.

T. T. S.

DISCOURSE.

MATTHEW x. 34. — *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword* —

EVEN by introducing, amidst the vile and turbulent passions and fancied interests of degenerate mankind, an element of truth, ultimately indeed producing peace and harmony, but in its intermediate operation becoming the occasion of violence and death, of all those agitations and discords symbolized by the sword, which the conflict and effervescence of most heterogeneous forces can create. Either Christ must lower himself down to a subordination unto man, or else, and it is the only alternative, not peace, but the sword, must express their relation, and that of their respective adherents, to each other.

The application of this thought is perfectly obvious. Its illustration will appear in the sequel of my discourse; a thought and a course of illustration, seemingly but little

congruous to a day of praise, but fully justified, I am persuaded, by the solemnity of the occasion. I must say it. I come before you, my friends, with feelings too deep for the common topics of thanksgiving. The state of our country is new. Free blood has flowed for freedom before; but when has it flowed by such hands, and in such circumstances? The martyr to truth and freedom has often yielded his life in other ages and other governments; but where on such a soil, and amid such boasts and gloryings of liberty? But I would come to utter no lamentations for the fallen, no reproaches of the living, no voice of dark foreboding for our country. There is something awful, indeed, to my thoughts, as I recall the quiet valley of the Kennebec, where I have shared the hospitality of the father now passed from earth, and of the mother left in an age of widowhood to mourn the son of her pride and her hope; as I think of that same son going from such a scene of peaceful labor, amid the gladness of a fresh and generous youth, to the far-off rivers of the west, there to bare his arm in the holy work of God and human freedom, not for himself, but for others; there to stand unshaken, undaunted, amidst repeated assaults of wrath and violence; there to consecrate himself to his God for life or death; there to fall in the front, the foremost rank of those elect spirits who forget themselves in their quenchless love of the free truth. Sweet it is, as awful, to muse on these things. Sweet it is, said the Roman lyric poet, sweet and

glorious to die for our father-land. Sweeter, I feel it, and more glorious, thus to have died for what is dearer than our native home, even that essential, imperishable humanity, which a base oppression hath trodden down and trampled on. I feel such a death worth living for — who would ask a better? Who would choose to lay down his head on his pillow to die with his friends weeping over him, if, with the love of God and truth and freedom in his heart, he might go up by such an ascent to Heaven? We cannot mourn for thee, noble martyr! If we weep to follow thee from thy beautiful native home, through thy many toils and perils, to thy grave, it is with sympathy for those thou hast left, but with exultation that God hath given thee to fight such a fight, thus to finish thy course, and such a crown, and so soon, to receive. Brethren! my heart is moved and exalted. Should we be spared from such an end, God grant that we may be at the least worthy of it!

But other views we will take of the ennobling subject. The first is this: The murder of the noble-minded Lovejoy is a legitimate offspring of American slavery. My general views of this subject have been long known by my friends; they have not been concealed; they shall be avowed. It is not a curse only to the slave, to the master, and to our country; it is a state of deepest wickedness, of unutterable guilt, an abomination which maketh desolate. But at this moment, I have something more specific to urge. What has been the manifestation of this spirit

within the last few years? It has set law at defiance, nay, trampled it under foot. It has violated the inalienable rights of humanity, nay, those very rights when secured and pledged to every citizen of our Union by solemn compact and constitution. It has laid ruthless hand on the sacred obligation of our government to protect each individual in transmitting his thoughts through the public mail. It has allowed individuals to usurp the functions of government, and to convert themselves at the same moment into witnesses, jurors and judges, nay legislators and executioners even, undisturbed and unpunished. It has allowed, do I say? No: it has prompted and sustained this outrageous usurpation, prostrating law, order and government. The spirit of slavery, far from confining itself within the domains of slavery, has entered our own New-England, within the very compass of that city in which Adams and Otis stirred the souls of men, who were men while manhood survived; within the very bounds of that region which the Pilgrims consecrated by their tears and prayers — who does not blush to say it? I am a son of the Pilgrims, and I choose to draw the veil over those vile transactions without exposing my country's shame. But the last catastrophe we have long needed. And it has come. The spirit of slavery, breathed out of hell — I speak with solemn and earnest deliberation, — has done its work. A free-born citizen of Maine, born on our own soil, which he tilled in his youth, and educated in our

schools; a man, generous and noble, against whose character no censure has perhaps ever been uttered, many years ago went, a youthful adventurer, to the south. He lived amidst slavery; he knew it. We are often told that we of the north may say nothing of it, because we know nothing. Lovejoy knew it. And if it has before been a mystery to us, his death has revealed that mystery. It is no longer concealed. From outrage on individual rights and the legitimate powers of law, slavery has but gone out to its natural results, bloodshed and midnight murder.

These results, I repeat, are natural. They are but the continuance, the consummation, the finishing of what it has been long laboring for. This first. But again I would show it in another way. What is slavery? The holding of man by man as a thing of mere property. Then, by legal expositions, not by fanatical misstatements, I am, body and soul, my master's, to feed and clothe, to teach or not to teach, to buy or sell, to treat well or ill, to deal with in all things without any reference to my own well-being, but solely as he deems his interest best to get the most work out of me. Smooth it over as we will or may, this is the plain unvarnished tale of what slavery is. But not all. First, the slave is to be got. Here you may say, we have nothing to do with it — the slave is not got, he is inherited. True, sometimes, but not always. And how long since the foreign slave-trade has ceased? Not ceased at all. It has been a prohibited traffic less than thirty

years, less than the days of my own memory. And still it is going on. How long it shall continue, God only knows. The slave-ship is on the coast of Africa. By purchase, by stealth, or by fraud, it matters not how, the poor wretch is seized and carried on board. Piled in as if so many oxen or horses, bound, and without any care other than to keep them in a condition for bringing a good price and making the voyage profitable, they lie sorrowing, famishing, and, to let one word tell the whole, enslaved. Enslaved! It is easy to speak the word — but what to bear the thing? Enslaved! God's own blessed earth and sky and air not to joy in as my own, but to visit with my tears! My own body not mine, but my master's! My soul, God's image, doomed to degradation and ruin! Those, who escape the perils of the middle passage, — the passage from sunny African shores and the land of joyous mirthful men, to that clime of boasted freedom where freedom claims and holds as its element the protection of the powerful in enslaving the feeble, — the passage often, and perhaps happiest then, from life to death, from a life which has ceased to be life, to that which is alone the friend and ransom of the wretch whom others have forsaken. But the details of the prison-ship of the slave, I cannot, if I would, attempt to depict. He is landed on a new continent, the lost bondman. Perhaps within the very walls of our capitol, beneath the very stars of the American flag — oh, shame! where is thy blush? — he is sold to an American

citizen. And for life himself, and for all ages his posterity are doomed to be the merest drudges of American freemen. For the manner in which he is governed and controlled, I shall say nothing; I merely request you to read and ponder the oft-repeated testimony of Jefferson. I say merely, that as slavery begun in lawless force, in the worst robbery, so it proceeds and remains; first, a continued robbery, next, a succession of forceful measures to preserve the prey thus lawlessly taken. The slave is held as a thing, bought and sold as a thing, moved and governed as a thing of merchandize, "a species of property." 'T is blasphemy to God; 't is violence to man.

Now such a state of things cannot exist without producing its effect on the whole character. Reverence of human nature is lost or diminished as that nature is degraded and abused. Respect for individual right is lost or diminished as that right is daily set at nought and trampled on. A general character of pride, violence and despotism, is engendered and nurtured. So far as the influence of slavery is left unbalanced, unchecked, unrestrained by nobler impulses, its result is thus an overbearing and reckless spirit. That this result has in fact developed itself the last few years, no honest man, I think, can fail to perceive. The result, you will observe, is far from confining itself to the mere relation of the master and slave. It goes out into the whole deportment and intercourse of the former. I cheerfully admit noble exceptions. Thank God, there is that in

man, and that in the laws of his government, which even slavery cannot wholly destroy. But such is its tendency; such are its developed results.

We have proceeded one step in showing the tendency of slavery to the result which must now agitate our country: It produces a violence of character, a substitution of force for reason and law. We may now take another step: all wickedness hates exposure. Hates it, I say. It not merely shrinks away from it; it hates the truth, which exposes it, with most intense hatred. We have seen it be so in the cause of temperance. What wrath, what malignity, what slander, what outrageous abuse, have been called forth in the strong antipathy of drunkenness to the truth, which exposed and laid it out, in its own nakedness and pollution, to the conscientious abhorrence of all good men! Never hath there been on earth a good and holy truth finding its way to the depths and recesses, to the centre and heart of evil, without provoking resistance and hostility. The darkness shuns the light. And when that darkness is impersonated in systems of living and concentrated agency; when it transfers itself from the outward world to the inward, and becomes the blackness of spiritual wickedness, the very counterpart and image of the infernal power; when leaguing itself with earth as well as hell, and bringing within its compass, and impregnating with its own form the wealth, the eloquence, the multitude, and, to a great extent, the government itself of States and nations; when

thus consolidated into one living mass, one scarce penetrable body, of very chaos; what can be looked for but that it should expel every ray that would pierce and dispel it? What but that it should manifest the infinite repugnance of darkness to light, of confusion to harmony, of blind, rayless error to all-piercing truth, of vice and malignity, of pride, of selfishness and every form of human depravity, to virtue and benevolence, to humility, love, and all those sister charities which God hath sent from his own bosom to bless his own world? Thus it was when Jesus Christ appeared on earth. It was an hour of guilty triumph, an hour given to the powers of darkness. And how was that hour marked? By the last stamp of crime. By the deed which shook earth and Heaven. By the crucifixion of God's own Son! Thus it will be until wickedness, severed from whatever is righteous and holy, shall find its own place of everlasting banishment. It would destroy heaven if it could. Adamantine chains alone hold it in, and will hold it forever. Before those chains are put on, before wickedness finds itself fast bound within enclosures it can never escape, by bonds it can never break, it will resist the power of that truth and virtue which would expose and destroy it. The Almighty can destroy it by the breath of his mouth; it has no power of resistance; all its weapons drop idly down beneath his puissant arm; but when his anointed servants go forth to the encounter, he suffers them to become monuments to the universe of that

sinful energy which reaches all but the throne itself of God, and proves that it would level that throne, if it could. This common, nay, universal character of sin, thus engraven into its very form and constituting its essential being, how can we expect it would fail of developing itself in the antipathy of an unrighteous tyranny, — a tyranny in which man arrogates to himself the prerogative of a God to his fellow, more even than God; for God governs by reason, by law, by love, not from self-will, not from selfishness, — the antipathy, I repeat, of such an unrighteous and impious usurpation to the sacred truth of God's image equally formed in all, and of Jesus Christ, the equal Saviour of all, and of the Holy Ghost, the equal sanctifier of all, and of Heaven equally open to all, and of every man on the face of the earth having the same everlasting right to know these truths, and, in the free exercise of the virtues they involve, to pursue his own welfare? On the deep, dark caverns of this dreadful abomination, into its very secret places and its strong holds, the truth hath been pouring its light from Heaven; the demon hath quailed, and shaken, and been filled with agitation; his own form he hath assumed, the form of forceful resistance to that truth. No, my brethren, it is not the human victim at which the arrow was aimed; that arrow had another scope. It sought the heart of imperishable truth. It beheld truth living and energetic in a human bosom, and in madness felt that truth itself would faint and wax feeble, when that bosom ceased

to beat. True, 't is madness; you might as well break the vial in which the air, the pure, sweet air we breathe, is enclosed, and then think you have annihilated the atmosphere itself, as deem that the truth, which proclaims and quickens freedom, is lost in the dissolution of that human frame, which she hath chosen among her dearest earthly shrines. Even for the victim himself of the destroying wrath, it is but the changing of his sphere of agency. It is but transferring him from a local habitation to a spiritual, where, for aught we know, he may be putting forth mightier agencies even for mankind. And for the truth, it is the hour of its triumph and glory. Like eastern odors, it diffuses itself the farther over the sea and over the land, and makes ocean, earth and Heaven smile. Yes, my friends, myriads may die, till but here and there one stand like the scattered stalks left after the reaping of a harvest field; they may die beneath the arm of oppression and violence; but God liveth, and in God truth and freedom live and triumph evermore. But I have wandered from my point. The shaft, I was saying, and I repeat it, which brought down the noble champion of freedom, was aimed, not at the person, but at the spiritual life. It came from the hand, which will be found impotent at last, of spiritual wickedness, and it came in its madness to go through the impenetrable bosom of everlasting truth. These words I speak forth in solemn conviction that they are the words of truth and soberness.

You may say, perhaps, it is not hostility to the truth; 'tis the rashness, the imprudence, the untimely and unsuitable interference with an agitating subject, which has led to such a catastrophe. Believe this who will; no man, it seems to me, can believe it, unless he determine before-hand he will. Men do not murder the rum-seller, or the drunkard, or even the base, slanderous editor of a political newspaper, because the one or the other is rash or imprudent. It is, and it is alone, the instinctive hatred of sin to holiness, of darkness to light, which begets, as its own natural offspring, violence and bloodshed.

But the man ought not to touch the subject. He knew it to be agitating; he knew it to be offensive; he knew it would provoke opposition, and expose him to destruction. Thou, a man, and sayest thou this? Thou, a lover of the truth, and such thy faith? Know, that, to whom the soul of his brother is dear as it ought to be, and to whom God gives the means of pleading for his welfare, to him it is not a thing left at his option, whether he will do so or no. God hath called him to plead for the oppressed. Shall he flee from God like Jonah? Or shall he go to the great and proud Nineveh, and bear his message from Heaven? Shall he hide the living truth in his own soul, for fear it will be peril to utter it? God forbid. Let him live for the truth. Let the truth live in his life, and quicken its life in his death. Slavery hath done its own work; the messenger of God's truth hath finished his.

Thus I leave my first view of the subject: — Murder, making the advocate of freedom its victim, is the legitimate result of the spirit, which lives and breathes in slavery. My second view shall relate to the appropriate and probable result of this event. In order to see the subject more clearly, I shall just advert to the unrelenting and long continued persecution of our martyred brother. The detail I have not the means of giving. I can only say in general, that he has been driven from place to place, from a slave State, in which he originally begun his work, to a free State; and that, of whatever an infuriate malignity could do for his overthrow, nothing has for a long time been spared. With what success in the end, we all know. Now this has become history. Henceforth, the name of Lovejoy is enrolled among the victims of a vile and relentless persecution. His virtues, his efforts, his sufferings, his whole course from childhood to his martyrdom, will stand forth prominent and bright on the records of human transactions. Sober men, even unfriendly to his views, will feel their minds revolting from such deeds; their sympathies will be with the dead, not the living; with the victim, not the persecutors. Many will trace this outrage back to its source, to that mother of abominations, slavery. Thus, accessions will be made to the number of those, who shall identify themselves with a despised and down-trodden truth. The prudent will be roused; the timid will be encouraged. But there are many, whose

souls now swell with holy indignation, as they contemplate the character and doings of slavery. They love and cleave to the truth, even in its degradation. Reproached, reviled, trodden under foot of man, they have taken it into their souls, and given it their hearts. Will they now forsake it? Sooner will the earth's pillars shake, and Heaven's base be rotten and sunken. Sooner will all nature change, and her laws yield themselves up to misrule and anarchy. No. The lovers of the truth, the friends of man, will be doubly friends and lovers of the forsaken. Mother! when your son is cast out and left destitute of men, can you forget him and forsake? Your heart will yearn over him with the deeper tenderness, and you will follow him in his desolation with your sweeter love, and your heart will itself break sooner than you will let that son of your sorrows and your hopes go from its affections. Believe me, there are who love truth and freedom as strongly, as enduringly, as the mother her son; and adversity will but make the blessed, but deserted form, more dear and lovely to their eyes. Such spirits will never shrink; they cannot quail. They may die; the truth they will not abandon. The memory of their brother, dying for what they love more than their own life, will not dishearten; it will quicken and invigorate. They will remember him; and his blood they will feel to be the seed of a glorious harvest, which truth shall gather in, when the time of harvest comes.

Again: There is another kindred effect, which I feel it must produce, even a more thorough self-consecration of all good men to the principles of universal truth. When I think of this event, when I dwell on the memory of a man, but a few years ago following the plough in our country valleys, first preparing himself for the work by an education at home, then going afar to the west, devoting himself to God and religion, and among other great interests, which surrounded him and called forth his efforts, seeking, in the very centre and heart of slavery, to resist and aid in overthrowing it, thus advancing the one, inseparable cause of God and humanity; when I retrace his toils, his trials, his manly bearing, his heroic and Christian constancy, crowned by such a death; I feel there is something worth living for. I feel that man has something of grandeur in his being, in his powers, in his destiny. I feel myself a man; and that manhood is a glorious boon, when it may do such duties, fulfill such ends, and find such a consummation. Henceforth, it is not the individual I see; the form of truth and freedom is before me; I do it homage, and feel anew that it is my life. Who can help feeling himself raised, exalted, ennobled, as by some heavenly presence? Yes; there are, who will feel themselves anew baptized into the name of God's holy truth; who will devote themselves gladly to its toils and its perils; who will live for it so long as it lets them live, and who will die for it, when it needs their death, to seal it afresh.

Nor will the effect be local or temporary. Henceforth, the name of our brother is among the few, which will never die. It is a name for the world and for all ages. It will soon be hailed, as the day-star of freedom, beyond the ocean. It has not sunken; it has just risen in its sky. True, it rose amid blood-red clouds and fearful phantoms of the night. But it peers through and above them all. The world will behold it. And the world will point us to it. From other lands, above all, from the land of our father's sepulchres, still venerable for its hoary and glorious recollections, and bound to us, not by the ties of a common kindred alone, but by the bonds of a common language and the same holy faith, we shall hear of it again. The echo from Europe, I trust it will be, God grant it may, like the voice of ten thousand thunders: Proud, boastful Americans! Tell us of your free country; tell us of your equal rights, your elective franchise; your popular government. Paper constitutions you have indeed; mere waste-paper! We ask not for them. It has been vile enough, which you have been all the time doing, stealing men from Africa to sustain your own pride, unsouling and brutalizing them on your own soil. Enough it were that you should hold your free constitutions and your Declaration of Independence in one hand, your scourge and the price of human sinews and blood and souls in the other. Enough that to stay the progress of freedom of thought and of speech, you have sought to prostrate the very principles of your government,

free discussion, free transmission of thought, free petition. Enough that your vile proscription should consign to reprobation and expose to unprotected violence, the noblest of your citizens, the men who love God and freedom more than they fear death, the very men you want for yourselves, as they are the true servants of Heaven, who will meet death for truth, even as they would lay them down in the quiet night to the blessedness of God's sweet gift of sleep. Enough that your pulpits, your popular assemblies, your halls of legislation, have combined to crush the waking form of heaven-born liberty. Base men! Republicanism, democracy on your lips — tyranny and murder in your hearts! Your work ye have consummated; have ye? Your deed of death will finish the progress of truth; will it? Your violence will turn back the embattled hosts of God; can it? Know, vain man, the gorgon shield is but now set in their front; and not a Minerva, not a false feeble power is behind. The arm that wields it is the eternal truth, which dwelleth in God and God in it, which is God and God is it. Tremble, vain boasters, before the mighty arm! Resist if ye will. Stand out against God as long as ye can. Before his arrowy beams of light, no power ever yet stood. Nay, think of that same truth, reproduced and quickened and impregnated with resistless strength in the bosoms of your citizens. The Saxon blood has not yet flowed wholly out of the American heart. The spirit of your ancestral Sidneys, and Hampdens, and

Miltons, and Howes, and Baxters, is not quite extinct. The potent influences which poured in upon their hearts, and made them live and die for God and man, — those influences flowing from the sacred bosom of freedom, torn, scarred, exposed in its humiliation; flowing from the maternal form they loved as children, and over which, as children over a mother, they wept when they saw her thus disfigured and disgraced, — those influences, now renewed and increasing, will do what they have done before. They will rouse a kindling enthusiasm, a lofty, generous, inextinguishable energy. Tears may be shed for a moment; but they will be such as Achilles wept over his lost Patroclus, nursing the inly burning strength, which will never stay, till it lays low the demoniac form of slavery, and drags it bound to its chariot wheels. Fear and quake, ye slaves of slavery itself! Your hour is past. Your ruin is sealed in the martyr's blood. Be strong and of good cheer, ye free spirits of America! That blood is the prophetic symbol of assured and near triumph. Such the voice, I trust, which Europe will reverberate upon our whole country. Such the tones which will float over our Atlantic coast, which will pass over our mountains and our valleys, which will go with every steam-boat into our remotest villages, and from the eastern ocean to the western. They are thoughts, thus returned from far lands and awakening the conscience within us, which can never perish. More are they than thoughts. They will become embodied and

high feeling; they will transform into their own likeness the essential manhood of mankind, and even in their repose will bespeak the fixed resolve, come what will, life or death, the one shall spend itself and the other shall be met only for the truth. Such I know to be the appropriate, such, I trust, will be the actual effect of the spirit of slavery, thus developed in its legitimate character and results.

My third and final view of this subject shall be the duty to which the present crisis urges us. · Here I first remark, it becomes us to acquaint ourselves thoroughly with slavery, to know what it is in itself, in its essential being, and its actual manifestation. Its advocates tell us we do not know it, we are ignorant of it; the people of the south only know it, and they know it to be a very good institution, the purest element forsooth, and the corner-stone of our republican government. But we, northerners, we know nothing about it. That is, to give the plain English interpretation of the language, the only man who knows what a safe and excellent thing either robbery, or man-stealing, or murder is, is either the robber, the man-stealer, the murderer, or his associates. Must I then join a band of ruffians to understand the nature of highway robbery, or become the associate of gamblers to learn what is the sin and evil of gambling? To steal a man in his native land; to put him in fetters and manacles, and bring him by force to a land of strangers; there to set him up at auction like an ox or a horse for sale to the highest bidder,

to sever, if so please the purchasers, the husband from the wife, the mother from her child; to break up all the sacred relations and embitter all the charities of home; to make marriage itself a temporary concubinage; to consign by express statute, and through severe penalties for its infraction, the whole race to utter ignorance of reading and of books; and to seal up the very book of God, lest those for whom Jesus lived and died, should read it; I cannot know all this complication of abominations to be wrong and deserving to be fought against, unless I become either directly or indirectly involved in them. Believe it not, my friends. 'T is no hard task to learn what slavery is. You have barely to read a few pages of history, to search out the principle of manhood, the element of human-kind in your own soul, and to remember that the negro is a man. This is all.

But why touch the subject here? Why speak of slavery at the north or in free States? Go rather to the slaveholder himself, and proclaim in his ear the truth. But let it be unthought of here, where we have nothing to do with it, and enough else to attend to. Various answers may be given to this objection. I say, first, we ought to know slavery, that we may be prepared to act north or south. If there may possibly be anything for us to do, we ought to know it; and we cannot know it without first ascertaining what the subject itself is, which calls us to action. I say, next, we ought to understand slavery well,

that we may be prepared to meet the arguments by which, both in the north and in the south, it is advocated. A northern gentleman lately told me of having much conversation with a southron, who gave him new ideas and new light about slavery. He proved to him that it was very different from what we commonly imagine; particularly, that the slaves are very happy. Here was testimony from the south to the north in favor of the institution. Such testimony received here, repeated, believed, passing into common opinion, becoming a public sentiment, goes back to the south as the voice of the north in favor of this "peculiar institution." Now we wish Slavery to be understood, that no such voice may ever be repeated to soothe the slaveholder's conscience. My answer to my informer was in substance this: Men may tell me as long as they will, and in as great numbers as may be, that the slave is happy. I have proof to the contrary, stronger than all testimony, the constitution of human nature making it impossible for a man to be happy while a slave. I have often said, and I repeat it, that allowing what is affirmed, allowing the slave to be happy in the only sense in which happiness can be asserted of humanity brought as near as possible to brutality, this very affirmation is a still more condemning proof of the demoniac power of the evil. Slavery can so far imbrute a man that he is content to bear it; then its agency is more infernal than with all my abhorrence of it, I have yet fully believed. But how, let

me repeat it, without acquiring knowledge of slavery, that is, of human beings, as far as possible, unsouled and imbruted; how, without thus opening to ourselves its very heart and essential being, can we meet such formidable arrays of argument and testimony as are borne to us, I had almost said on every breeze? Whoever then would ever open his lips to speak of the subject at all, him it becomes, of him it is a most solemn duty, to know whereof he speaks, to understand that of which he affirms aught for good or for ill.

Knowledge is in order to feeling and action. Let me then say, that, next to the acquisition of clear and well-defined views in respect to this subject, it is our duty to do our utmost in resisting, through the spirit of Christ, the institution of American slavery. I wish the qualification deeply regarded; through the spirit of Christ; not barely in his spirit, in conformity to it, but through that spirit, as the agent and effectual power. The spirit of Christ is not only the spirit of forbearance, of meekness, of courtesy, but it is the spirit no less of freedom, of boldness, of energy, of unceasing and unconquerable hostility to whatever is vile and unholy. In and through this spirit, do your utmost to hasten the utter and perpetual eradication of slavery.

But what are we to do? This is a natural inquiry. Let me begin the answer by reminding you what we, the people, I mean of the free States, have done. One valor-

ous achievement, to be sure; we have mobbed Garrison — for the comfort of troubled consciences. We have raised, I know not how many other mobs — for the same benevolent purpose, perhaps. We have suffered our legislation to be marked with lowest contempt of the truth which maketh free — to convince southern people that we will not interfere with their "peculiar institutions." We have, in our private intercourse, dealt with slavery as "a very delicate question," and though "we really dislike it as much as anybody," yet the slaves are much better off than is said, and the masters are to be pitied rather than censured — all that the south may be convinced we have no ill will to their domestic rights and blessings. And the south have — I trust it is not so now, but it has been — the south have regarded the free States as the vindicators and apologists of slavery. Now I say we can undo what we have done. We can spare some portion of our horror at abolition, in consideration of the horror which there is in a vile and murderous institution, enchaining more than two millions of our countrymen, and killing the freeman who pleads for them. We can instruct our legislators no longer to misrepresent and insult the advocates of freedom. We can abandon our mobs, and, as "gentlemen of the first respectability," we can treat a man decently though he has not lost all the blood received from ancestors, who stood on Bunker Hill or at Yorktown. We can undo what we have done. In so doing, we shall very speedily convince

the holders of their brethren in an unrighteous bondage, that wherever they may look for a flattering unction to lay to their consciences, it is to some other ground than that which bears the name of England and the sepulchres of the pilgrim puritans.

I say further, we can converse on this subject; thereby kindling in other hearts the emotions and purposes which fill our own, and wakening in ourselves new energy by sympathy with their fervor; thereby spreading knowledge of the truth, the feeling of obligation, and the solemn conviction that every man has a vital interest in the entire freedom of his whole country. Thus can we form a Spartan phalanx, side to side, shield to shield, not only impenetrable to the enemy, but as it moves on to those grave and solemn Doric strains which fill the soul with steadfast and immoveable resolve, with a calm intensity, a living, unquenchable enthusiasm, bearing consternation, dismay, confusion, into the thickest ranks of opposition.

I need scarcely add, in conclusion, that we can pray. There is a God who causes the wrath of man to praise him; whose preragative it is to bring order out of confusion, out of discord harmony; whose eye seeth the oppressions of the wicked, and their murderous spirit, and deeds; all whose attributes are one in their infinite and irresistible abhorrence of slavery; whose ear is open to the prayer of the needy and helpless, and closed against the cry of the proud oppressor; whose secret place of

thunder is fast filling up with bolts of destroying wrath against the tyranny of man; and who, sooner or later, will reveal to the universe the side which he hath taken in the contest between truth, freedom, righteousness, himself, and lying words, usurping despotism, unrighteous deeds, the impersonation and action of evil. That some other agency than of just vengeance may set the slave free; that something less terrific than universal insurrection, massacre and bloodshed, may reveal God and deliver our country from the curse; that a new creation, not an utter destruction, may pass over the chaos of American institutions, let every voice ascend, every hand be lifted, every heart poured out, in earnest and unceasing supplication. The work is God's. Going forth in his name, putting on his armor, deriving from him strength, and imploring his guidance and aid, pursue this holy warfare, each in his own rank and to the utmost of his power, until with the breaking of the last yoke, the wiping away the last tear, the soothing of the last pang of slavery, glad voices shall resound from earth to Heaven, thine is the victory, the victory thine, Lord God Almighty!

Note. I shall be excused in transferring to this note what, in the original, formed a portion of the discourse itself, a passage from a letter of Mr. Lovejoy written soon

after the outrages at St. Charles, dated October 3. "And now, my dear brother, if you ask, what are my own feelings at a time like this, I answer, perfectly calm, perfectly resigned. Though in the midst of danger, I have a constant sense of security that keeps me alike from fear or anxiety. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' The promise, I feel, has been literally fulfilled unto me. I read the promises of the Bible, and especially the Psalms, with a delight, a refreshing of soul, I never knew before. Some persons here call me courageous, and others pronounce me stubborn; but I feel and know that I am neither the one nor the other. That I am enabled to continue firm in the midst of my trials, is all of God. Let no one give me any credit for it. I disclaim it. I should feel that I am robbing Him, if even in thought I should claim the least share to myself. He has said, 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be,' and he has made his promise good. To Him be all the praise. Pray for me.

"We have a few excellent brethren here in Alton. They are sincerely desirous to know their duty in this crisis, and to do it. But as yet, they cannot see that duty requires them to maintain their cause at all hazards. And of this be assured, the cause of truth still lives in Illinois, and will not want defenders. Whether our paper starts again will depend on our friends, east, west, north and south. So far as depends on me, it shall go. By the

blessing of God, I will never abandon the enterprize so long as I live, and until success has crowned it. And there are those in Illinois, who join me in this sentiment. And if I am to die, it cannot be in a better cause."

Noble testimony, now sealed with noble blood! How true the language of the poet:

"Who the Creator loves, created might
Dread not: within their tents no terrors walk:
For they are holiest things before the Lord,
Aye, unprofaned, though earth should league with hell."

Well of such a man, even in utmost peril, we may say,

"Refreshed from heaven,
He calms the throb and tempest of his heart.
His countenance settles; a soft solemn bliss
Swims in his eye—his swimming eye upraised:
And Faith's whole armor glitters on his limbs!
And thus transfigured with a dreadless awe,
A solemn hush of soul, meek he beholds
All things of terrible seeming: yea, unmoved
Views e'en the immitigable ministers,
That shower down vengeance on these latter days."

George D. Barrows Esq.

Lynchburg.

1103

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